

PART 1: CHAPTER 3

I worked hard at the office today. My boss was kind. He asked me if I wasn't too tired and he also wanted to know how old mother was. I said, 'About sixty,' so as not to get it wrong and for some reason he seemed to be relieved and to regard the matter as closed.

There was a whole stack of bills of lading piling up on my desk and I had to go through them all. Before leaving the office to go for lunch, I washed my hands. I like doing this at lunchtime. I don't enjoy it so much in the evening because the roller towel which people use is all wet: it's been there all day. I mentioned this once to my boss. He replied that he found it regrettable, but it was none the less a detail which didn't matter. I left a bit late, at half past twelve, with Emmanuel, who works in despatch. The office overlooks the sea and we spent a few minutes just watching the boats in the harbour in the burning sunshine. At that point a lorry came rushing along with its chains rattling and its engine backfiring. Emmanuel said, 'Let's go,' and I started running. The lorry overtook us and we chased after it. I was swamped by the noise and the dust. I couldn't see a thing and all I was conscious of was the speed of this chaotic dash, in and out of crane and winches, with masts dancing on the horizon and ships' hulls rushing alongside. I caught hold first and took flying leap. Then I helped Emmanuel up. We were both out of breath and the lorry was jumping about in the sun and the dust on the rough cobbles of the quayside. Emmanuel was laughing so much he could hardly breathe.

We arrived at Celeste's dripping with sweat. He was there as usual, with his paunch and his apron and his white moustache. He asked me if I was 'all right then.' I said yes and I was hungry. I ate very quickly and had some coffee. Then I went home and slept for a bit because I'd drunk too much wine and when I woke up, I felt like a cigarette. It was late and I ran to catch a tram. I worked all afternoon. It was very hot in the office and in the evening, when I left, I was glad to walk slowly back along by the docks. The sky was green and I felt happy. All the same, I went straight home because I wanted to cook myself some boiled potatoes.

On my way upstairs, in the dark, I bumped into old Salamano, my next-door neighbour. He had his dog with him. They've been together for eight years. The spaniel has got a skin disease – mange, I think – which makes almost all its hair fall out and covers it with brown blotches and scabs. After living with it for so long, the two of them alone together in one tiny room, Salamano has ended up looking like the dog. He's got reddish scabs on his face and his hair is thin and yellow. And the dog has developed something of its master's walk, all hunched up with its neck stretched forward and its nose sticking out. They look as if they belong to the same species and yet they hate each other. Twice a day, at eleven o'clock and six, the old man takes his dog for a walk. In eight years they haven't changed their route. You can see them in the rue de Lyon, the dog dragging the man along until old Salamano stumbles. Then he beats the dog and swears at it. The dog cringes in fear and trails behind. At that point it's the old man's turn to drag it along again and gets beaten

Commented [1]:
The need for a routine

Commented [2]:
The other side to Meursault

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What is the significance of Salamano and his dog?

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How is this significant to reflect this society

Commented [5]:
Meursault is interested in the routine.

and sworn at again. When the dog forgets, it starts pulling its master along again and gets beaten and sworn at again. Then they both stop on the pavement and stare at each other, the dog in terror, the man in hatred. It's like that every day. When the dog wants to urinate, the old man won't give it time and drags it on, so that the spaniel scatters a trail of little drops behind it. But if the dog ever does it in the room, then it gets beaten again. It's been going on like that for **eight years**. Celeste always says, 'It's dreadful,' but in fact you can never tell. When I met him on the stairs, Salamano was busy swearing at his dog. He was saying, 'Filthy, lousy animal!' and the dog was whimpering. I said, 'Good evening,' but the old man went on swearing. So I asked him what the dog had done. He didn't answer. He just went on saying, 'Filthy, lousy animal!' I could just about see him, bent over his dog, busy fiddling with something on its collar. I asked again a bit louder. Then, without turning round he answered with a sort of suppressed fury, 'He's always there.' Then he set off, dragging the animal after him as it trailed its feet along the ground, whimpering.

Just then my other next-door neighbour came in. Local **people** say he lives off women. When you ask him what he does though, he's a 'warehouseman'. Most people don't like him much. But he often talks to me and sometimes comes round for a minute or two because I listen to **him**. I find what he says interesting. **Besides, I've got no reason not to talk to him.** He's called Raymond Sintes. He's fairly short, with broad shoulders and a nose like a **boxer**. He's always dressed very smartly. He also said to me once, when we were talking about Salamano, 'Isn't it dreadful!' **He asked me if it didn't disgust me and I said no.**

We went upstairs and I was about to say goodnight to him when he said, 'I've got some wine and black pudding in my room. Do you want to have a bite to eat with me? ...' I realized that this would save me having to cook for myself and I **accepted**. He also only has one room, and a kitchen with no window. Above his bed there's a pink and white plaster **angel**, some photos of famous sportsmen and two or three pin-ups. The room was dirty and the bed unmade. First he lit his paraffin lamp and then took a rather **dubious**-looking bandage out of his pocket and wrapped it round his right hand. I asked him what he'd done. He told me he'd had a fight with a bloke who was looking for trouble.

'You see, Meursault,' he said, 'it's not that I'm a troublemaker, but I'm no coward. This bloke, he said to me, "Get down off that tram, if you're a man." I said to him, "Just calm down, okay." Then he said I wasn't a man. So I got down and I said to him, "All right, that's enough, or you'll get flattened." He said, "Who by?" So I let him have it, and he went down. Me, I was going to help him up. But he started kicking me from off the ground. So I gave him one with my knee and a couple of swipes. His face was covered in blood. I asked him if he'd had **enough**. He said, "Yes." All this time, Sintes was fiddling with his **bandage**. I was sitting on the bed. He said, 'So you see it wasn't me who started **it**. He went for me first.' It was true and I **agreed**. Then he announced that in fact he wanted to ask my advice about this business, because **I was a man of the world** and I could help him and afterwards he'd be my mate. I didn't say anything and he asked me again if I wanted to be his mate. I said I didn't mind: he seemed

Commented [6]:

Note the significance of this character

Commented [7]:

Meaning?

Commented [8]:

So is Meursault like 'most people'?

Commented [9]:

How does the physical description affect/influence your impression of this character?

Commented [10]:

Why not?

Commented [11]:

He does what is convenient

Commented [12]:

Does this setting reflect his personality?

Commented [13]:

What else is dubious?

Commented [14]:

What does this body language suggest?

Commented [15]:

How reliable is Raymond's account?

Commented [16]:

How does Meursault know that it is true?

pleased. He got out some black pudding, fried it up and put some glasses, plates, knives and forks and two bottles of wine on the table. All this in silence. Then we sat down. As we ate, he started telling me his story. He hesitated a bit at first. 'There was this girl... she was sort of my mistress.' Then man he'd had a fight with was this girl's brother. He told me that he'd been keeping her. I didn't say anything and yet he added immediately that he knew what local people said, but that he had a clear conscience and he was a warehouseman.

Commented [17]:
Meursault notices an order

Commented [18]:
Why did he hesitate?

Commented [19]:
Why was Raymond defensive?

'To get back to my story,' he said, 'I realized that there was some deceiving going on.' He used to give her just enough to live on. He paid her rent for her and gave her twenty francs a day for food. 'Three hundred francs for the room, six hundred francs for food, a pair of stockings every now and then, that made it a thousand francs. Her ladyship didn't work. But she kept telling me that it wasn't enough, that she couldn't manage with what I was giving her. And yet I kept telling her, "Why don't you get a part-time job? You'd make things easier for me with all these little extras. I bought you a new suit this month, I give you twenty francs a day, I pay your rent and you go and have coffee with your friends every afternoon. You provide the coffee and sugar. But I provide the money. I've been fair with you and now you're being unfair with me." But she wouldn't work, she just kept telling me that she couldn't manage and that's how I realised that there was some deceiving going on.'

He then told me that he'd found a lottery ticket in her bag and she hadn't been able to explain how she'd paid for it. A bit later he'd found a 'pawn-ticket' in her room which showed that she'd pawned two bracelets. Until then he hadn't even known these bracelets existed. 'I could tell that there was some deceiving going on. So I left her. But first I hit her. And then I told her a few home-truths. I told her that all she was interested in was putting it about. What I told her was this, you see, Meursault, "You don't realize that everyone's jealous of the happiness I give you. One day you'll know how happy you were."

He'd beat her till she'd bled. Before that he hadn't used to beat her. 'I used to hit her, but sort of affectionately. She'd yell a bit. I'd close the shutters and it'd finish the way it always does. But this time I really mean it. And I don't think I've punished her enough.'

Commented [20]:
What is your impression of Raymond?

He then explained that this was what he needed some advice about. He stopped to adjust the wick on the lamp which was charring. I was still listening. I'd drink almost a litre of wine and my temples were burning. I was smoking Raymond's cigarettes because I'd run out. The last trams were passing and the few remaining street-noises faded away with them into the distance. Raymond went on. What annoyed him was that he 'still felt like sleeping with her.' But he wanted to punish her. First he'd thought of taking her to a hotel and calling in the vice squad to cause a scandal and have her registered as a prostitute. After that he'd gone to some friends he had in the underworld. They had no idea. And as Raymond pointed out to me, so much for being in the underworld. That's what he'd told them and they'd then suggested 'marking' her. But that wasn't what he wanted. He'd think it over. First he wanted to

Commented [21]:
This was convenient

Commented [22]:
Irony?

Commented [23]:
What is your impression of Raymond?

ask me something. Then again, before he asked me, he wanted to know what I thought about his story. I told him that I hadn't thought about it but it was interesting. He asked me if I thought there was some deceiving going on, and as far as I could see, it did seem as if there was some deceiving going on, and if I thought she should be punished and what I'd do in his position, and I said you could never tell, but I understood why he should want to punish her. I drank a bit more wine. He lit a cigarette and told me his plan. He wanted to write a letter 'which would really hurt and at the same time make her sorry'. Then, when she came back, he'd go to bed with her and 'right at the crucial moment' he'd spit in her face and throw her out. I agreed that that would punish her all right. But Raymond told me that he didn't feel capable of writing the kind of letter that was needed and that he'd thought I might draft it for him. When I didn't say anything, he asked me if I'd mind doing it right away and I said no.

Commented [24]:
Why didn't Raymond wish to write the letter?

He stood up after drinking another glass of wine. He pushed aside the plates and the bit of cold pudding that we'd left. He carefully wiped the oilcloth that was on the table. Then he took out of a drawer in his bedside table a sheet of squared paper, a yellow envelope, a small red wooded pen-box and a square inkpot with purple ink in it. When he told me the girl's name I realized she was Moorish. I wrote the letter. I did it rather haphazardly, but I did my best to please Raymond because I had no reason not to please him. Then I read it out. He listened, smoking and nodding his head, then he asked me to read it again. He was extremely pleased. He told me, 'I could tell you were a man of the world.' I didn't notice at first but he was calling me by my first name. It was only when he announced, 'Now you're really my mate,' and used it again that it struck me. He repeated his remark and I said, 'Yes.' I didn't mind being his mate and he really seemed keen on it. He put the letter in the envelope and we finished off the wine. Then we sat and smoked for a while in silence. Outside, everything was quiet and we heard the swish of a passing car. I said, 'It's late.' Raymond agreed. He remarked on how quickly time passed and in a way it was true. I felt sleepy. But it was too much trouble to get up. I must have looked tired because Raymond told me not to let go of myself. At first I didn't understand. Then he explained that he'd heard about mother's death but it was something that was bound to happen sooner or later. That was what I thought too.

Commented [25]:
A person of Muslim descent

The Moors were Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb, the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, and Malta during the Middle Ages. The Moors were initially of Berber and Arab descent, though the term was later applied to Africans, Iberian Christian converts to Islam, and people of mixed ancestry.

Commented [26]:
Why haphazardly? What was his state?

Commented [27]:
Note the contrast

I got up. Raymond shook my hand warmly and said that we men always understood one another. I went out and, closing the door behind me, I paused for a moment in the dark, on the landing. The house was quiet and a vague breath of moist air was wafting up from the depths of the stair-well. All I could hear was the blood throbbing in my ears. I stood quite still. But in old Salamano's room, the dog whimpered feebly.

Commented [28]:
What is the tone of this statement? How are both characters similar and different?

Commented [29]:
Note how this chapter ends on an ominous tone considering what happens in the next chapter.